PFLAG
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

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KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER MARCH, 1955

A MOTHER'S LETTER

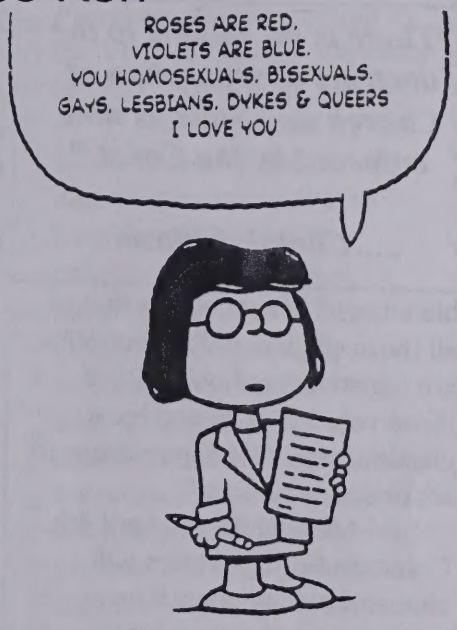
by Joyce Kerr

If homosexuality is your child's true nature, then choosing to tell parents and families is the purest act of love. It is a high compliment to trust us enough to risk losing us rather than continued lying, or to be silent about this important aspect of themselves and drift out of our lives.

Our children did not choose to be gay. Who on this earth would choose to be part of a minority group so discriminated against? Gay people need to come to terms with all the feelings of self-loathing and disgust that our society has taught them to feel. They need the support of family, and perhaps knowledgeable gay friendly counseling to help restore their self-esteem.

As parents, we should strive to understand what our gay children go through in this homophobic society, the inner turmoil, the constant fear of disclosure, the fear for job, housing, and personal safety.

The fastest way to understanding comes through meeting other gay people through support groups like PFLAG. We learn so much about their character and their bravery. We learn so much about being human.



The higher the visibility of parents, families, and friends of the homosexual, the more gay people will be perceived as a part of mainstream society rather than separate from it. As families become more open about a gay member, public acceptance of them will grow.

When gay people try to gain understanding and acceptance they usually have only limited success. When parents and families are supportive however, straight people are more apt to listen, perceiving us as more objective.

Gay people cannot achieve this alone. They need us as the bridge of understanding between the gay and straight world. We should all be striving for a world where people are true to themselves. Where all people, regardless of their orientation, are valued.

(Joyce Kerr is one of the founders of the Ann Arbor PFLAG chapter. This article originally appeared in the *Ann Arbor News.)*

NEW MEETING TIME FOR SOCIAL CHIT-CHAT AND COFFEE
6:30 PM

DO WHAT YOU CAN

When the thing to which we devote our energies does not succeed, it does not necessarily mean that we have failed. It is not our responsibility to set the whole world right, but it is our responsibility to do what we can within our little sphere of influence. That which we do helps or hinders the progress of the world by just so much.

(Reprinted from the Long Island PFLAG newsletter.)

THE 15% SOLUTION

In 1985 at a conference in Washington called "How to Win an Election," Pat Robertson made this statement, "We have enough votes to run this country. . . and when the people say we've had enough, we're going to take over!" Now, 10 years later, Pat Robertson and his Christian Coalition have won a stunning victory.

Washington Week in Review has reported that 2/3rd of the new representatives to Congress are associated with either the Christan Coalition or Evangelical Churches.

Their victory was won fair and square after years of voter registration efforts, grassroots training sessions, and making effective use of television and radio to advance a political agenda. (It has been reported that 70% of all talk programs on TV and radio are produced by the Religious Right.)

The Christian Coalition was among the key players and developers of the Contract With America. Ralph Reed,who is now the head of the organization, cut his political teeth working as a campaign staffer for Newt Gingrich and Jesse Helms

Reed reports that in 1994 the organization distributed 33 million voter guides with the help of 60,000 churches.

What is the secret of the Christian Coalition's success —- aside from the churches and the built-in support system?

The 15% solution, that's what. As explained at a 1991 conference, "Elections are decided by about 15% of the eligible voters." The reason is that of all those eligible, only about 60% are registered and only half of those vote. In state and local elections, the 15% figure drops to six or seven percent."

"There is no validity to the doctrine of separation of Church and State as now enforced by the Court."

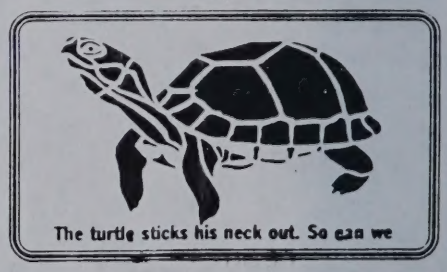
.....Cheryl Gillaspie

Meanwhile, on April 4th, Colorado Springs voters will choose new city council members. Among those up for re-election is Cheryl Gillaspie, who recently voted to dismantle the Human Relations Commision and has spoken before the Christian Coalition on "The Myth of the Separation of Church and State." She endorses CFV and Amendment 2.

You can bet that the ultra-right will be turning out at the polls to vote for her and others of the same bent.

Will their 15% solution win out again?

GET OUT & VOTE in the upcoming city election



NEWT'S NAPALM

At the urging of Lou Sheldon of the Traditional Values Coalition, Newt Gingrich has confirmed that he will schedule hearings on whether to withhold federal funds from schools which provide positive information about homosexuality. The hearings are reportedly scheduled for late summer or early fall. We'll keep you informed.

Meanwhile, if you have opinions on any of the wide-ranging topics before the U. S. House of Representatives, you can reach the Speaker of the House's office at 202-224-3121.

TRASH AND TREASURE YARD SALE AT WINDJAMMER—BRIARGATE IN MAY

(EXACT DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED)-...

Spring housecleaning?? Hang on to those white elephants and help PFLAG earn some money the painless way! Linda Knutson has kindly offered her yard for us to set up display tables at the Windjammer neighborhood flea market. It's an annual affair and draws hundreds of people looking for bargains. Clean out those closets! Unclutter that garage!! We need everyone's contributions. Your trash may be another person's treasure!! .

CONCERN GROWS FOR MEL WHITE

On February 15th, Rev .Mel White, former Dean of the Cathedral of Hope in Dallas, was arrested in Virgina Beach for a civil disobedience act of trespassing. He remains in jail and has vowed to fast until Robertson acknowledges the growing number of hate crimes against gays and lesbians. Now in his fourth week of fasting, he is visibly weakening. Trial date is set for March 28th.

On February 14th, Rev. White and several other church delegates visited the campus of the Christian Coalition in Virgina Beach,with a request to meet with Robertson. A spokesman for the evangelist declared that Robertson would never meet with White because homosexuality represents the "cult of death." When White was threatened with arrest, he replied, "As an act of civil disobedience and in the name of Christ, I refuse to leave. "

Each day a delegation of 12 Christian and Jewish leaders returns to the campus to ask that Robertson meet with White. Robertson has issued a press release denouncing the act of civil disobedience as a "publicity stunt."

An oupouring of support for White is flooding into the jail at Virgina Beach and a number of sympathy rallies are being held around the country.

The Colorado Springs PFLAG Chapter remembers the wonderful spirit of renewal and hope that Mel and Gary inspired here last summer during their "Fast For Understanding." At that time Focus on the Family DID agree to see Mel and other representatives (among them a PFLAG member.) Although the effort was not successful, we know of at least one member of management who listened.

In addition to our very real concern for the welfare of a friend and mentor, we are saddened by the fact that Pat Robertson would heartlessly refuse to talk with a non-violent leader of the gay community who came in peace.

ON SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

In 1777 Thomas Jefferson drafted the ***Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom.*** It was adopted by the Virginia General Assembly in 1786. An excerpt follows:

Be it enacted by the General Assembly, that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be inforced, restrained, molested or burdened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinion in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no way diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities."

SPECIAL EVENT

Candidate Forum
Tuesday, March 28
6:00 pm
Centennial Hall

Citizen's Project will sponsor a Candidate Forum to enable you to meet and ask questions of Colorado Springs Mayoral and City Council candidates. This Forum will start at 6:30 p.m. and candidates will be available for conversation and informal questions for the next half hour. At 7 p.m, candidates will be questioned by a panel of local media representatives. The Forum will be held in Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade (east entrance.) Citizens Project candidate surveys will be available.

BILL HUDDY TO SPEAK AT APRIL MEETING

Bill Huddy, Executive Director of Citizen's Project, is scheduled to speak at the April 12th PFLAG meeting. His topic will be "Is There A Future for the Human Relations Commission in Colorado Springs?."

The Commission, which was founded 30 years ago, was almost scuttled by the City Council in late 1994. A straw vote of 6-3 indicated the Council favored disbanding the Commission in its entirety.

Citizen's Project was a prime mover in launching a massive counter-campaign in support of civil rights. Council was duly impressed with the flood of postcards, calls and petitions sent their way from a large cross-section of the community. On January 24th Councilvoted 7-1 to grant the HRC a six-month stay of execution so that a coalition of community organizations could explore alternative plans for addressing human and civil rights in Colorado Springs.

We look forward to hearing Bill Huddy's thoughts on this important issue.

CHECK IT OUT

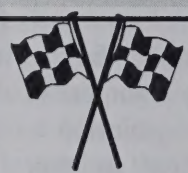
Discovering that someone you love is gay often requires rethinking accepted opinions. Questions —-some of them agonizing —- are sure to arise. Fortunately, the last twenty years have seen the development of a large and growing body of literature to help answer the questions, fears, and misunderstandings that people have about homosexuality.

Over the past two years, the Colorado Springs PFLAG Chapter has been acquiring a variety of books and videos, all of which may be checked out. Just pick out one at the next PFLAG meeting, sign your name, take it home to read or view and bring it back at the next PFLAG meeting.

Two favorites are *Beyond Acceptance* written by Carolyn Welch Griffin and *Growing Up Gay, Growing Up Lesbian, A Literary Anthology* by Bennett Singer. *In Beyond Acceptance,* parents talk about their experiences from the initial shock of disclosure through the stages of pain and grief to closeness. *Growing up Gay* is an anthology geared specifically for gay and lesbian youth. It includes more than 50 coming-of-age stories by professional authors as well as teenage writers.

BULLETIN BOARD

MARCH 8	PFLAG Meeting - Program will feature a panel discussion by ALSO (Alternative Lifestyles and Others) from the Universalist Unitarian Church.
APRIL 12	PFLAG Meeting - Bill Huddy of Citizen's Project will speak on the Future of the Human Relations Commission in Colorado Springs.
MAY 7	Mothers March Against AIDS, Washington D.C.
MAY 10	PFLAG Meeting - Father Joe Halloran will surprise the chapter with a special program designed to test our knowledge about the gay, lesbian and bisexual
MAY- ??	ANNUAL PFLAG TRASH AND TREASURE YARD SALE - WINDJAMMER IN BRIARGATE
JUNE 14:	PFLAG Meeting. Program to be announced
JUNE 16-18	PRIDEFEST WEEKEND.



INDY 95

THE 14th INTERNATIONAL
PFLAG CONVENTION
will be held in Indianapolis
September 29 - October 1.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER . . . . MEL WHITE

THEME: "Educating Familes Toward Love and Acceptance"

BEGIN TO PLAN NOW FOR AN INSPIRING AND FUN TIME WITH PFLAGGERS FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY.

WE LOVE OUR KIDS
JUST THE WAY
THEY ARE

EVERYONE
please remember to keep our meetings
CONFIDENTIAL

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian and bisexual persons, their families and friends, through support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights. PFLAG provides an opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.